

Repeat the Flesh in Numbers

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Señor Squirrel

The habenero peppers were no accident.
I grew them
especially for you,
to watch you pluck a bright yellow bonnet,
turn it over in your hands like a topaz
or tourmaline, then sink your bicuspid
hard into the flesh, only to throw
it three feet into the air, your mouth
on fire with my revenge, tail stiff
and high as you raced for your burrow
as I laughed, counting the losses
I had suffered at your paws—tulip bulbs,
sunflower heads, sleepy mornings
interrupted by your family arguments
in the tree outside my window...

Me gusto, Señor Squirrel.

"My Dogs Are My Kids," She Said, and I Said

you need to admit it's just a conversation starter
designed to make you look
oh, so sensitive, an animal lover.
Awwwww....Admit it
If you chained your child
in a kennel while you
flew first class
cross-country
charges would be filed, and show me a kid
you can pacify with a rubber bone
There is no Doggie Social Services to
file charges when you leave
the dog alone in the house all day
without a sitter, just a bowl of dry
dog food and a dirty bowl of water
and please just shut up
about how Bowzer shredded
your \$300 Jimmy Chu shoes
for one thing, you called them your "Chu's"
and it's a lot to expect a dog
to not hear that as "chews"
and for another thing
if you had a kid and he had
eaten your shoes
you're the kind of person who would put him up
for adoption
or maybe, if you were feeling charitable, have him put
into inpatient therapy
but a dog who chews up shoes
is a great sympathy generator in a cocktail party
conversation—so you keep the pup, hoping
for more humorous anecdotes.
Admit it, if you really
had guts you'd take the dog
to the pound
get yourself knocked up
and really, really
have a reason to be
miserable or maybe even
admired.

Confession

Oh bless me Father,
for after we have sinned
I stand in the corner
of the hallway where
I can see a narrow rectangle of you
between the bathroom door
and its hinges
you don't quite fit
into this narrow frame
but it draws my eye
to the angles of your shoulder blades
knifing back and forth
as you brush your teeth
the undulations of your buttocks
as you reach into the medicine cabinet
the ripples of your back
as you caress your face
with the electric razor
and I check my watch
to see if we have time
to sin again.